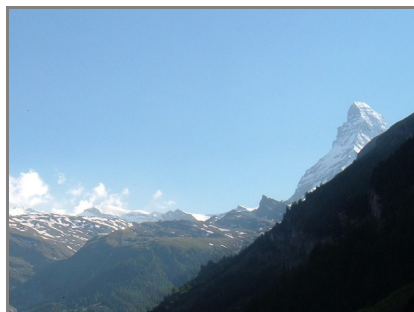


Walker's Haute Route East (Self-Guided)

Please email us at info@alpineexploratory.com or call us on +44 0)1729 823 197 to chat about this holiday. You'll find all the latest information at www.alpineexploratory.com/walkers-haute-route-east.html.



A glimpse of the Matterhorn

About these Holiday Notes

These Holiday Notes help you decide whether this holiday is right for you. Before your trip we send you final detailed information.

Details

Start Arolla
Finish Zermatt
Regions Swiss Valais
Countries Switzerland
Length 6 walking days and 7 nights
Total distance 98km or 61 miles
Typical day 16km (10 miles), 900m ascent
Highest altitude 2,916m
Grade Expert

Introduction

The Walker's Haute Route is one of the finest, if not the finest, trek of its type in Europe. Pick up the trail in Arolla and trek to Zermatt in a week of superb Alpine walking.

This is the Walker's Haute Route as opposed to the Classic Haute Route, which takes to the high mountains and glaciers and is often made on skis. Our route is a trek, with no technical ground.

Zermatt as a trek destination is just right: lively, pleasant and thoroughly in tune with its surrounding mountains. If you have the time, ask us to book you an extra day or two at the end of your trip, to enjoy being in Zermatt. Local walks are excellent. Arolla by contrast is very small, but with a high-mountain atmosphere and its own charm.

The trek is a challenging one. The route crosses a succession of passes at nearly 3,000m, guaranteeing stiff climbs most mornings. Navigation can be difficult in mist. The high passes are steep and rocky in places. Typically they are free of snow during

the summer, but in colder weather their altitude means rain can fall as snow.

The first and last days are more gentle, walking through verdant, pastoral Swiss valleys. On your last day the lure of that first classic Matterhorn view drives you on.

Our approach

Your route

Our trip gives a complete journey on foot from Arolla to Zermatt. No transport is needed along the route. The Haute Route is a loosely defined trail without its own waymarks on the ground; where the trail splits we follow routes via Col de Torrent, Forcletta and the valley through Randa. This trip of course picks up the Haute Route in Arolla and complements the Western half of the route. This Eastern half is slightly simpler in terms of effort on an average day, but it still has its tough days and 4 high passes to cross.

Routecards and maps

Each day's route is explained in detail on your routecards, to bring you to your night's accommodation. We give you the real maps for you to follow, not printouts or photocopies.

Getting there and back

Your holiday starts in Arolla and ends in Zermatt. Travel to Arolla and from Zermatt is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Geneva is the most convenient airport with several transfer options available. Full information on flight and transfer options will be sent to you on booking.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Arolla

Evening arrival in Arolla. Enjoy dining out in this small mountain resort. **Hotel in Arolla**

Day 2: Arolla to La Sage

An easy and scenic valley walk starts your trek. Begin with a stroll down to the useful and attractive village of Les Haudères in Val d'Herens, then finish with a short walk up to the hamlet of La Sage. **Hotel in La Sage**

Day 3: La Sage to Grimentz

Cross Col de Torrent to reach the Barrage de Moiry, the dam of the impressive Lac de Moiry. It's an unrelenting climb, but taken steadily it's not too hard work and the views back to Arolla are worth it. Good paths lead downhill below the dam and through woods to Grimentz. A night spent here is a treat; explore the old barns nestling in the village centre. **Hotel in Grimentz**

Day 4: Grimentz to Zinal

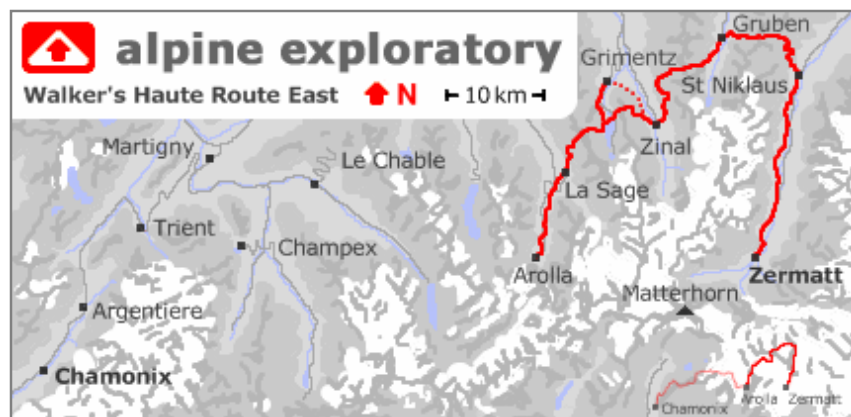
Return to the Barrage de Moiry either on foot or by postbus. A relatively short climb to Col de Sorebois leads to a descent, steep at the end, to Zinal. Alternatively, walk through the forest from Grimentz to Zinal. Zinal is an interesting little place to spend a night and has good options for eating out. **Hotel in Zinal**

Day 5: Zinal to Gruben

A traversing path gains height steadily from Zinal with long views back to the head of the valley. Higher up, reach the Forcletta pass and enter the German-speaking part of the Valais. Gruben is a small village in the quiet Turtmanntal valley. **Auberge in Gruben**

Day 6: Gruben to St Niklaus

The Augstbordpass at 2,893m is the last pass before the valley of Zermatt is reached. The ascent should feel very manageable, being well-angled and full of interest. Drop to



Jungen, above the Mattertal valley and with views into its upper reaches but not yet to Zermatt or the Matterhorn themselves. A last descent in woods and you arrive in the valley at St Niklaus. **Hotel in St Niklaus**

Day 7: St Niklaus to Zermatt

Complete the route to Zermatt with a moderate day's trek in the valley. There are no more passes to cross, but the day still has plenty of ups and downs. The Matterhorn appears in its classic view just before you hit town, as a surprise as you cross a rise. Arrive with time to get to know Zermatt. It's a resort with a lot going on. A day, or several, spent here would bring many rewards. **Hotel in Zermatt**

Day 8: Departure from Zermatt

Morning departure from Zermatt

Our usual schedule of accommodation might not be available, especially if there is not much time between booking and your trip starting. We will book accommodation as closely as possible to this itinerary and present you a schedule for you to check before we proceed.

Accommodation

Our standard schedule of accommodation consists of 1 night in a 4-star hotel, 2 nights in 3-star hotels, 1 night in a 2-star hotel and 3 nights in auberges or simple hotels.

We book ensuite accommodation except where it is not available, for example in older buildings or more remote locations. Your info pack contains full details of your accommodation including contact details and directions.

The walking

Terrain

Haute Route terrain comprises wide tracks through forests, the odd country lane, zig-zagging hillside paths and steep, rocky mountain paths. In some places the paths are particularly steep and loose, for example on the final approaches to cols.

The Haute Route has no *via ferrata* or climbing sections and is a trek throughout, albeit a tough one.

Your own routes

While your routecards make up the walking for the trip, you are of course free to walk wherever you choose, taking side trips or going by a different route of your own choice. Please note that if you follow your own route you will have left the holiday for the duration.

Food

Meals included are all breakfasts and 2 evening meals (at La Sage and at Gruben).

For lunches there is lots of opportunity to stock up on ingredients along the route. You will sometimes find huts and cafés during the

walking, useful for lunch stops. Your routecards give information about food shops and refreshment stops along the route.

For eating out there are good options along the way.

Insurance

Clients must have insurance to cover themselves for helicopter search & rescue, medical expenses and repatriation. We recommend, but it is not compulsory, that you also have cover for personal liability, cancellation and your baggage and money. You might find that your annual multi-trip travel insurance covers these items already. We will send you details of suitable insurance policies on booking.

Passports and visas

UK passport holders do not need a visa to enter Switzerland. Please check that your passport is in date.

Weather

The weather in the Swiss Valais from July to September is generally highly suitable for Alpine walking.

While snowfall is possible on higher ground all year round, it is unlikely in July and August. During cold spells in summer, rain can fall as snow on the Haute Route's higher passes. Additionally, patches of snow left over from Winter and Spring might linger into July, but should not pose problems.

July and August are commonly the hottest months but with greater amounts of rain and greater risk of afternoon thunder storms; the first half of September can be stable, with the chance of some beautifully clear days.

Thunderstorms are a particular danger in summer, occurring most often in the afternoons.

This all means that it is sensible to come equipped and expecting all the types of weather that might be experienced in a typical summer in the UK: from heavy rain storms with a chill in the air, to hot sunshine.

Equipment

You will need the usual equipment for mountain walking in the Alps. Especially important are good walking boots, waterproofs and sun protection.

We will send you an equipment list on booking. Please also see the Equipment page of our website for more information.

Local expenses

Local expenses include food and drink other than those meals that are included, plus any local transport, attractions and extras.

Guided days

Hire a professional mountain leader to join you on this self-guided holiday, for one or more days. A leader helps plan and carry out each day's walking and adds interest to your holiday by pointing out local features. Please contact us for prices and more information.

Groups

Walk by yourself or in your own group, or see if we can match you up with other like-minded walkers on the same holiday. Any group will be a maximum of 8 people.

Hazards

Health

Switzerland does not require tourists to take any vaccinations. However, it is recommended to keep tetanus vaccines up to date.

Safety

This is adventure travel! This holiday takes you to some wild and remote areas, in particular some areas of upland mountains where navigation can be difficult in poor weather. The weather can also be a hazard in itself. During any walking, whether following a routecard or making your own route, you are responsible for your own actions and safety and you should join the trip with suitable skills, experience and equipment.

Further information

Please email us with any questions at info@alpineexploratory.com.

Disclaimer

This information is given in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of issue. Alpine Exploratory cannot be liable for any loss or injury incurred.